Title: Need to extend grant-in-aid to more special schools of mentally challenged and timely release of funds under Deen Dayal Rehabilitation Scheme.

SHRI P.T. THOMAS (IDUKKI): There are more than three hundred Special Schools in Kerala taking care of mentally challenged children. Except one Special School run by the Government of Kerala, all other Special Schools are run by voluntary organisations. All the Special Schools are struggling hard to run the schools.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, through the Deen Dayal Rehabilitation Scheme, is providing grant-in-aid for only 51 Special Schools in Kerala. The grant-in-aid is not released in time. The grant-in-aid is released only at the end of the school year.

The application for grant-in-aid is recommended by the Government Education Officers. The State Government, again verifies and recommends it to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The Educational Officers and the State Government cut short the grant-in-aid amount to eighty per cent of the total request. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment further cuts short the amount to sixty per cent. Ultimately, the Special Schools in Kerala receive only sixty per cent of the running cost as grant-in-aid from the Deen Dayal Rehabilitation Scheme.

Remuneration given to staff as honorarium is also very low. For a special teacher the honorarium provided is Rs. 3,800. ...(*Interruptions*) The honorarium provided to teaching and non-teaching staff needs to be raised. The amount provided to mentally challenged children who are in the boarding houses are also very meagre. This also needs to be raised.

So, I would request the Ministry concerned to take necessary steps in this issue of those children who needs our care always.